



Faces of abuse



Many Chinese women experience some form of domestic violence. It rarely, if ever, is reported.

Spanish photographer Pere Ibanez is calling attention to the silent problem with his latest collection, Break the Silence.

The images, shot in a depressing green tint, show the bad things that happen in private.

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Plan to push back retirement met with anger

By Zhao Hongyi

Men and women who have been expecting to collect social security when they turn 60 and 55 had best make other plans.

That was the message from the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, which since June has been working on a plan that would push the age of eligibility to 65.

Under a new plan proposed by He Ping, director of the ministry's Social Security Research Institute, the age of retirement would slip one year every two years beginning in 2016, with the retirement age for both men and women halting at 65 in 2045.

The ministry called the change an inevitable trend.

On June 27, the central government's website announced that the central government will be exploring "flexible retirement schedules" as part of the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015).

The reason, according to the roadmap, is a combination of plummeting pension reserves, decreasing labor and rapidly increasing retirement.

"A report released by the Bank of China earlier this year says by the year of 2013, the pension fund in China will run a shortage of 18.3 trillion yuan," Yin Xiguo, a professor of human resources studies at the University of Chongqing, said.



Compared with their ancestors, Chinese elders are enjoying life.

CFP Photo

Bumping the age of retirement by one year can reduce expenditures by 16 billion yuan and pad the pension fund by 4 billion at the national level.

According to the latest population census conducted in 2010, China has more than 178 million residents who are older than 60. "This is 23.6 percent of the world's total," the report said.

"Labor in China will contract from 970 million in 2010 to 870 million in 2050," said Zheng Bingwen, director of social security studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. "The critical point will come in 2015, when the number will start declining

from 998 million by about 3.66 million each year."

"It is estimated that China will have a labor shortage after 2030," said Li Jun, a researcher from the academy.

"The reason is a lack of young people due to the family planning policy that has been in place for three decades," said He Li, chief analyst at Guotai Junan Securities.

Both Li and He said postponing the retirement age will ease the decline in labor supply, reduce the surge in labor costs and stabilize the economy.

But the proposal has been overwhelmingly opposed by the public, according to an online survey conducted by Sina.com.

China's first laws on retirement were passed after the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. The government stated early on that males should retire at the age of 60 and females at 55.

For the first 30 years of the republic, there was no national pension fund. Retirees were supported by their former employers, which were all state-owned.

In 1992, China began creating a national pension fund that was disbursed through the provinces. The fund worked well for its first decade, but has been collapsing since the central government raised disbursements to keep pace with inflation.

Many provinces are exploring new ways to tackle the shortage. Shanghai is drafting a bill to encourage individuals to prepare a private investment portfolio to support their life after retirement.

It is also encouraging individuals to join their company's bonus programs to receive a tax-free bonus when they retire from their companies.

The tax exemption in Shanghai would also cover the pension products sold by commercial banks, a type of third pension purchased only by those who are already well-off.

For current retirees, the pension system is usually their only source of income.

Youth volunteer to see the world

By Bao Chengrong

China's youth are discovering that being a volunteer is one of the best ways to travel.

At a recent talk at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, three experienced volunteers shared stories about where their work has taken them.

Cheng Yuan, leader of the American Hiking Society, made his first trip to Alaska as a volunteer during the summer vacation of 2010.

The schedule for his seven-day tour primarily involved working to protect the ecology of the state's national parks. Cheng said they picked dandelions to protect other plants. The weather was cold and rainy, and Cheng often woke up wet in his tent. Their only place to wash was a cold lake, and black bear attacks were a constant threat.

On his second trip, which was much more challenging, Cheng was appointed the team

leader. Before the tour, he contacted the forestry department and developed assignments for all the other members. The group had to climb a mountain and swim across a river to reach their destination.

To help build new roads, they were asked to pick holes into the rocks and insert dynamite so they could be blasted away. After a day of hard work, he and his companions sat down to enjoy the area's natural beauty.

"The experience changed my life. I gave up going to graduate school because I realized that life has so many other opportunities," Cheng said.

Zi Yu, another volunteer, spent her time on the Gobi in Xinjiang, where she assisted in an international marathon.

Her work included checking the athlete's equipment, preparing cars and camels and taking injured athletes to see a doctor. Zi didn't have

time to worry about where to take a shower since the work kept her so busy. She was surprised to see a 71-year-old man finish the contest with a respectable time.

"Participating in volunteer travel has helped my heart to grow up," she said.

Unlike Cheng and Zi, Fang Jie began volunteering during a gap year. She quit her job as a nurse last year to travel. In Calcutta, Fang learned about Mother House, the NGO established by Mother Teresa to help dying and critically ill elders.

The work was a spiritual challenge for Fang. Since Mother House had no anesthetic, she had to listen to patients scream and struggle during treatment. Some volunteers were even struck unconscious by patients.

Once, when she encountered an old woman who refused to let doctors check her blood pressure, Fang spent

hours trying to convince her before the woman relented and mumbled "thank you."

Many of the volunteers did little to protect themselves, touching patients' wounds with their bare hands. Few actual doctors stopped through Mother House, and those who were there were only able to treat the most serious patients.

Fang said her work at Mother House was physically and mentally demanding. She is now preparing for her next trip.

Many organizations and institutes promote volunteer travel in China and abroad.

1kg+, one of the best-known domestic groups, encourages young travelers to carry an extra kilogram of books and paper for poor children they encounter while traveling the countryside. Volunteers with the program also talk with rural children and share their experiences online to encourage others to join in.



Zi Yu shares her story of being a volunteer.



Cheng Yuan speaks about volunteering

Photos provided by UCCA

15 years in, HK still strong

Central gov unveils plans to boost Hong Kong

Two years before Hong Kong was returned to China, *Fortune* magazine made a bold prediction: the handover would kill the city.

However, Hong Kong is thriving 15 years after its return from British colonial rule.



People attend celebrations at Victoria Harbor.

Yuan Shuiling/CFP Photo

The central government has unveiled an array of supportive measures to enhance cooperation and exchange between the mainland and Hong Kong and to further support the city's economic and social development.

The measures, announced on the eve of the 15th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland, cover trade and economy, finance, education, science and technology, tourism and cooperation with Guangdong Province.

Fifteen years after its historic return on July 1, 1997, Hong Kong's economy is thriving and its role as an international financial hub has been elevated and enhanced.

Its economy grew 5 percent on average between 2004 and 2011, outpacing most developed economies, and it is continually ranked by international financial institutions as one of the world's most competitive economies. In terms of financial prowess, Hong Kong is deemed on a parallel with New York and London.

Offshore yuan hub

The central government vowed to promote the further development of the offshore yuan market in Hong Kong to help secure Hong Kong's status as a major international financial hub.

The central government encourages foreign investors to use China's currency, the yuan, to conduct trade settlements and investment in Hong Kong.

Other financial policies include improving the variety of offshore yuan-based services in Hong Kong and facilitating long-term investment from Hong Kong into the mainland's capital market.

The central government will encourage mainland and Hong Kong enterprises to invest abroad together and promote coordination among airports, harbors and train systems throughout the Pearl River Delta.

The move to expand offshore use of the yuan will further secure Hong Kong's place as a major international financial center, said Andy Ji, currency strategist at Commonwealth Bank of



Victoria Harbor

Australia in Singapore.

It also will help boost yuan demand as more instruments for yuan-related investments are made available, he said.

Donald Tsang, former chief executive of Hong Kong, said he believes the inaugural listing of yuan sovereign bonds will increase institutional investors' recognition of sovereign bonds and encourage listing of more yuan bonds in Hong Kong.

The offshore yuan bond market started in 2007 when China's central bank permitted mainland-based financial institutions to issue yuan denominated bonds in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong now possesses the largest offshore yuan liquidity pool, with offshore deposits growing from 310 billion yuan at the end of 2010 to 589 billion yuan at the end of 2011.

Cross-border investment

As part of its plan to boost financial exchange, the country has approved mutual listings of exchange traded funds (ETFs) on Hong Kong and mainland exchanges, said the Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) of Hong Kong.

The SFC welcomed the China Securities Regulatory Commission's approval Monday of two ETFs to be listed on the Shanghai and Shenzhen stock exchanges that will invest directly in Hong Kong-listed stocks, each tracking a Hong Kong stock index, the SFC

said in a statement.

The approval of the Hong Kong Stock ETFs represents a milestone in implementing the relevant measures under supplements VI and VII to the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), SFC's Chairman Eddy Fong said.

Hong Kong Stock ETFs provide an alternative channel for mainland investors to participate in the Hong Kong securities market and further strengthen the cooperation between the mainland and Hong Kong capital markets, he said.

The SFC has also authorized the world's first Renminbi (yuan) Qualified Foreign Institutional Investor (RQFII) A-share ETF for listing on the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong.

In another sign of growing financial cooperation between the mainland and Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited, one of the world's leading exchange companies by market value, agreed to form a joint venture with Chinese exchanges to develop index-linked and equity derivative products.

The new company, expected to be established within three months from the execution of the agreement, will also engage in market promotion, customer service, technical service and infrastructure development, it said.

The joint efforts of the three exchanges have great strategic significance and mark a milestone in financial cooperation among Shanghai, Shenzhen and Hong Kong, Hong Kong Financial Secretary John Tsang said.

The government also announced detailed policies to foster a special zone in the southern boomtown of Shenzhen to speed up cooperation between Hong Kong and the mainland.

Under the plan, the Qianhai zone, a 15-square-kilometer stretch of reclaimed land in the Qianhai Bay, will become a test bed for further opening of the financial industry. The move comes after the central government's steps to increase yuan use abroad.

(Xinhua)

BMW begins recall of 3,000 cars

By Huang Daohen

As many as 3,000 BMW cars are being recalled due to a defect in their steering systems, the nation's quality watchdog said Wednesday.

The General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine said the recall includes 2,712 3-Series and 114 X1-model cars manufactured in China, as well as 49 imported 3-Series and 32 imported Z4-models.

The recall, which begins August 15, will be handled by BMW (China) Auto and BMW Brilliance Auto, a joint venture by the BMW Group and domestic automaker Brilliance China Auto.

The companies said they would offer free replacements for the defective components.

In a country where most car buyers look at recall histories when deciding whether to buy a product, many are worried BMW's decision may damage the brand's reputation in China.

Dennis Hu, a 27-year-old engineer, said the carmaker's reputation with not escape unscathed.

Hu drives a newly imported Volkswagen CC. "When I checked my list of potential purchases, Volkswagen was the only carmaker with no recalls in the last year," he said.

Hu said most young car buyers are purchasing their first vehicle. "We do some homework about the cars through Internet reviews and a test drive, but this cannot identify potential quality problems," he said.

But industrial analysts supported BMW's decision.

"Recalls, though unpleasant, protect consumers' interests and reveal a company's integrity," said Wen Yijun, an analyst at Oriental Securities in Beijing.

"Recalls are much better than having firms do nothing to address safety problems," Hu said, adding that Chinese consumers have become the worst-hit victims of defective cars due to the legal loopholes on recalls.

Currently, no news is better than bad news for the average carmaker and the consumer as well.

The government issued its first Regulations on Defective Automobile Products Recall in 2004 to strengthen quality supervision and enhance road safety. The regulations penalized delinquent carmakers with maximum fines of 30,000 yuan.

In its 2010 revision, the penalty was raised to between 200,000 and 500,000 yuan.

A musician and a novelist

American violinist brings his first book

By Liu Xiaochen

Eugene Drucker, a world-famous violinist who has won eight Grammy Awards and founded the Emerson String Quartet more than 30 years ago, was in Beijing last week.

He gave a small recital, but his main purpose wasn't music: it was to promote his first novel, *The Savior*, which has just been released in Chinese.



Eugene Drucker plays the violin at a recital.

Photo by Liu Xiaochen

Drucker, 60, was always a man of divided pursuits. He studied literature at Columbia University and music at Juilliard at the same time, an incredible feat considering both schools are among the best in the world in those respective fields.

Throughout his lifelong music career, Drucker has continually written articles about music, but one day he realized he had a need for a creative project.

"If I never try to write a novel, I can't apply the lessons I've learned throughout the long process of writing," he said.

Finding the time to write was not easy.

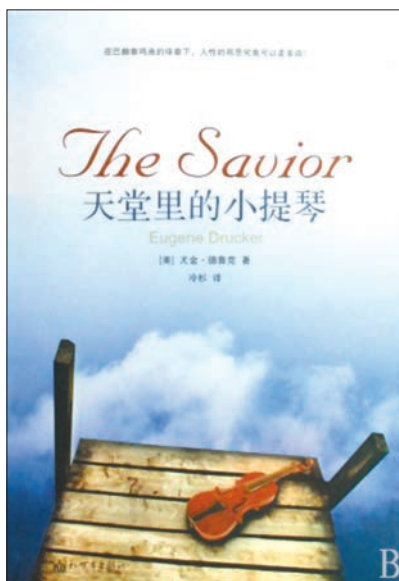
"Sometimes, on tour, I'd return to my hotel after a concert and work another hour or half an hour on my book," he said. "At the same time, I composed music, and that required creativity and energy just like fiction."

Music sometimes fed into the writing process, but often it clashed, he said.

"Sometimes I was frustrated," he said. "It was hard to find the right form, to make it convincing to readers, but I eventually found a way to do it. That gave me great satisfaction. I think the human mind has a strong ability to separate things into compartments."

Music in his novel

The Savior is about a violinist in a German prison camp during the final weeks of World War II. The main character, a German Drucker said is modeled loosely after himself, is conflicted about the events going



Drucker's first novel

Photo provided to Beijing Today

on around him.

"They made their own compromises," Drucker said of people like his main character. "Heroes who resisted the Germans mostly did not survive."

Drucker, whose father is Jewish and told him many stories from that period, said he tried to humanize his main character as much as possible so that readers could identify with him.

"The point is to have readers be able to identify with him even toward the end, when he has compromised his values," Drucker said.

Drucker said he hopes Chinese readers can identify with the difficult choices his characters make. The main character's weakness is his willingness to submit to those in power.

At a book reading in Beijing, Drucker's translator pointed out, "There is a special connection between Jews and China. When they fled Germany, more than 10,000 of them went to Shanghai."

The violinist then led a recital with the Emerson String Quartet.

"For me, a fan of classical music, this was a rare chance," said a participant. "I came from Tianjin last night, as I couldn't miss this."

The future

Drucker's book will soon be translated into German. Drucker hopes to see it appear in Italian and Romanian as well.

He is grateful for all the publicity he gets.

"It's never going to be a bestseller because it is a very specialized subject," he said.

He already has ideas for his next novel, a story that will investigate the effects of power and probably be based in the US.

"It's not about music, but politics," he said.

Meanwhile, Drucker will continue being a musician. He is currently composing background music for a production of Hamlet.

He will also continue playing with the Emerson String Quartet.

"I've been playing violin most of my life," he said. "This has been my main focus for 35 years. We will continue playing together. I don't know how long, but we have such great music to sustain us every season. This is an important part of my life."

Global mayors talk about city development through culture

By Bao Chengrong

Last Thursday, mayors and officials from 25 cities gathered in Beijing for a three-day discussion as part of the 2012 Beijing Forum on Sustainable Development of Cities. The talks focused on how to revive culture in cities.

London, which hosts the Olympic Games that begins later this month, has hosted a series of cultural festivals, such as London Fashion Week, London Film Festival and London Design Week, to promote its development, said Liu Tongbo, chief representative of the mayor's office in London.

Liu said those festivals also provide a platform for further communication between London's enterprises and global enterprises, bringing in potential commercial opportunities and benefits.

For instance, London Fashion Week last year brought £74 million to British designers. Numerous cultural activities for the Queen's Jubilee also boosted London's tourism. Boris Johnson, London's mayor, recently introduced an eight-year cultural strategy.

In Washington DC, an "innovative economy" and new cultural industry has garnered \$5 billion, according to Harriet Tregoning, director of the city's Office of Planning.

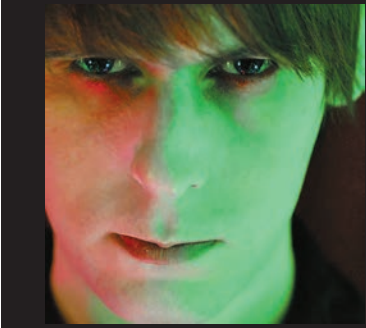
Geneva, because of its diversity, has attracted many international organizations to headquarter there, including the World Health Organization and World Trade Organization. Forty percent of the city's population is foreigners.

Though Geneva is a small city, it has hosted quite a few international meetings. Michelle Chevalier, vice secretary general of the city government office, said the Confucius institute built last year is supported by colleges both in Beijing and Geneva.

In Tel Aviv, deputy mayor Asaph Zamir introduced plans to let graffiti artists create art along certain roads.

Tirana, capital of Albania, has encouraged young artists to exhibit their works and participate in outdoor cultural activities. Lulzim Basha, Tirana mayor, said that in order to protect traditional culture, citizens should join the city's construction process. As for cultural relics, they should be left for the next generation.

The other parts of the forum included an urban culture exhibition and arts festival. Established in 2010, the forum is an international communication platform between Beijing and its sister cities. Copenhagen signed an agreement with Beijing recently, making it the 47th international sister city.



Pere Ibanez

Spanish photographer appeals for end to domestic violence

By Liu Xiaochen

Domestic violence is a serious problem that affects many in China, but deep-rooted cultural beliefs leave people generally reluctant to talk about the abuse.

Last month, a photography exhibition in Beijing by Pere Ibanez, *Break the Silence*, sought to change that.

Ibanez, from Spain, said he shot models in such a way to capture sadness or other negatives expressions, and coupled it with depressing green tones.

"One girl is crying in the photo because she quarreled with her boyfriend," Ibanez said while standing in front of a picture. "The picture didn't go through any post-processing. The model and I shot without preparation."

"I think it feels real she really cries for love."

Sixteen victims, mostly female, are depicted in Ibanez's exhibition. Some of the victims hold on to a previous idea of love, which they think they can rekindle. Some are psychologically lost, are mothers who suffer to protect their children.

The pictures also show abusers in tears, overwhelmed by remorse and regret.

"These photos took me one and a half years to finish," Ibanez said. "During the shooting, I carried a lot of negative emotions and stress."

He had not planned to create a collection centered around domestic violence, but he was

*"Early Winter"*

Photos provided by Pere Ibanez

inspired by the experience of a very good friend.

"Domestic violence is around me," he said. "It's quite serious. When I talk about domestic violence, I don't just mean physical violence: I also mean emotional violence, too, like husbands who say their wives don't work or are stupid or fat."

He said that one of his friends, after living with her boyfriend for years, experienced a rough break-up. It was only then that she realized how badly he had treated her and how little he left her with.

"The situation hurt me very much," Ibanez said. "I did this collection for the people who would understand them because they've suffered like this before."

Ibanez said there is never a quick fix for domestic violence. There's only a process of learn how to respect others.

"Domestic violence doesn't just happen against women," he said. "It's human to human. Many people have not learned how to respect others in this world. In my hometown, you can see how bad children treat other children. I am afraid that when they grow up, they may do the same thing to their lovers."

Part of the exhibition's message is that people lack the knowledge of how to be in a relationship.

Ibanez said Chinese people have a tendency to not talk about the bad things which happen in private.

"People do not look for help," he said. "But they need psychological help and the protection of the law to make them stronger. This exhibition breaks the silence."

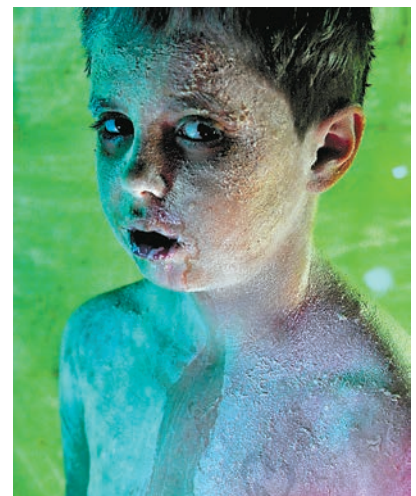
The Canadian non-governmental organization Peace for Humanity, cooperating with the Chinese organization AGAPE, was also on hand to fundraise for victims of domestic violence in China.

Leftover income will be used to found a platform for victims of domestic abuse to speak out.

"The reason I joined this activity is because the organization understands my work," Ibanez said. "Many times, people misunderstand my work, saying it's bloody. But my message is anti-violence."

"Works on the topic of domestic violence are few," said Ibanez's assistant. "Few organizations and people are out there raising money for the victims of domestic violence. Although we see examples of violence, there are few channels to help people – I hope this exhibition can help more people understand what domestic violence is."

Ibanez is currently working on a new collection, which will not be about violence.

*"Broken Line 2.0"**"No Place Like Home"**"Break the Silence"*

Untitled

CHP opposes Guggenheim Museum intrusion

By Liu Xiaochen

Last month, *Chinese Museum* magazine and the architectural design website artda.cn announced a plan to bring part of the Guggenheim Museum to Beijing's Imperial Archives.

The news was met with skepticism, especially from the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center (CHP). On June 30, He Shuzhong, CHP founder and chairman, hosted a seminar called "Yes, We CAN (Cultural Action Network)," during which participants discussed whether it was proper to integrate the Guggenheim and Imperial Archives environments.

The Imperial Archives is the royal archive of the Ming and Qing dynasties, located in the south of Nanchizi Street, east of Tiananmen Square. It is the most intact royal archive in China, built 460 years ago.

It is an important attraction for Chinese tourists. The archives are said to be China's first historical archive.

Meanwhile, the Guggenheim, one of the world's most famous museums, has made plans to open a Beijing branch.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation hired architectural design firm Studio Pei-Zhu to design the museum in Beijing.

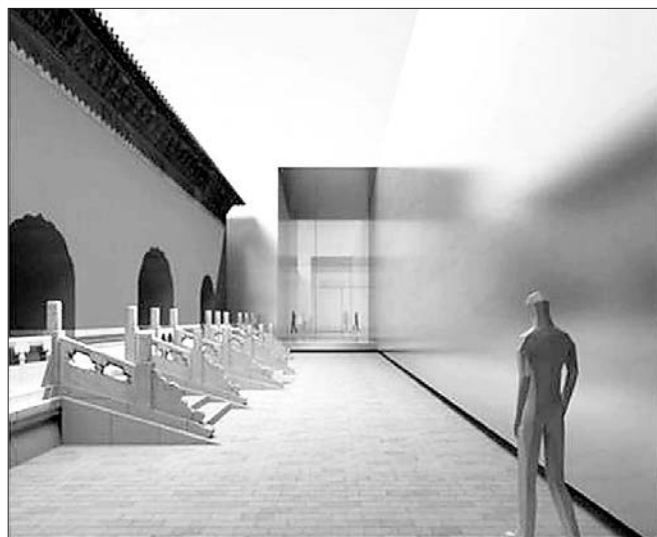
"The worst thing is not that the museum will be built in the Imperial Archives, but that it may damage China's monuments," said one CHP seminar participant.

"The relevant departments



He Shuzhong, CHP founder and chairman (middle), hosting a seminar about the integration of the Guggenheim Museum into the Imperial Archives

Photo by Liu Xiaochen



Design photo of the Guggenheim Museum in Beijing

should balance the relationship between protection and utilization," said another participant. "Protection should

be the priority. The Imperial Archives is a national heritage that should be protected by law. So, this design should be delivered to the State Administration of Cultural Heritage for approval."

The members drafted a formal statement of opposition. It includes three main points.

First, the Imperial Archives is very important and cannot be occupied. The old city of Beijing already has enough scars, so people should not try to damage it further.

Second, the Imperial Archives' cultural value and artistic value do not get the attention they deserve, including from architects and artists.

Third, though CHP is against the plan, it looks forward to the opening of the Guggenheim Museum in Beijing.

The final draft of the report will be released to the public in the near future.

CHP officially registered as a non-profit organization in 2003. It has held a number of activities to raise awareness of cultural heritage protection. One of its bigger projects was appealing not to demolish the old residences of Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin.

At the same time, it also helps residents become aware of the value of their own cultural heritage.

Beijing Playhouse's drama club workshop opens in August

The one and only English amateur theater is opening a new workshop, Drama Club, in August. The workshop is for people who have some singing skills but may not have ever formally performed. They can learn and practice the basics of stage singing and dancing with a friendly instructor.

In September, the playhouse also offers audition tips for all actors.

Drama Club will meet on the first Tuesday of every month at 7 pm and be open to everyone.

Where: Nearby the Tree, behind Sanlitun Village, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

When: August 7, 7 pm: singing and dancing for stage

September 7, 7 pm: how to audition

Website: beijingplayhouse.com

(By Wei Ying)

Beijing Playhouse auditions for Oklahoma!

Photo by Cynthia He



Subway network continues to expand

By Jidong Zhong

The capital will have two new subway lines later this year, as the last rails for Subway Line 6 are an extension for Line 10 were completed last week.

Beijing currently has 15 subway lines that span 372 kilometers. By the end of this year, another four lines will be open, extending the coverage to 440 kilometers, making Beijing Subway the longest subway network in the world.

For the first time, Beijing subway engineers are trying to incorporate high-speed railway technology, according to Xinhua News. Line 6 trains are able to reach a top speed of 100 kilometers per hour, fastest among all existing subway trains.

Line 6, which runs parallel to Line 1, is expected to ease congestion on that line.

The Line 10 extension runs south between Third and Fourth Ring Roads. Another extension is planned for the future that will make Line 10 into a loop.

By next year, more stops



The capital is developing its public transportation network to ease traffic on the roads.

Jiang Xin/CFP Photo

will be added to existing lines. Line 8 will be extended six stops southward, while Line 9 will extend four stops to the north.

These plans are part of the city's wider efforts to relieve traffic congestion. There are

more than 5 million private cars in Beijing, making rush-hour driving unbearable.

According to Qianlong.com, more than 7 million people take the Beijing subway every day.

During the 11th Beijing People's Congress, an initia-

tive to have 50 percent of the city's commuters using public transportation instead of driving was introduced. A bus or subway station should always be within 1 kilometer of every spot inside Fifth Ring Road, according to the plan.

Sunflowers blossom in July



Feng Jun/CFP Photo

Olympic Forest Park may be out of the way and surrounded by concrete, but that doesn't mean there's no reason to visit.

On its west side, sunflowers are coming into bloom, attracting visitors from all over the city.

Sunflower season only lasts a month, so go quick. Olympic Forest Park has eight gates, and all of them will have directions to get to the sunflower patches.

Olympic Forest Park

Where: Beisihuan Zhong Lu, Bei Sihuan Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 6 am - 8 pm

Tel: 8499 2008

(By Wei Ying)

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyiing@ynet.com

Can you recommend a clothing store that sells extra-large clothes, specifically pants?

You can try Winterless Plaza on the corner of Dawang Lu and Guanghua Lu. They have some very good stores there that carry foreign sizes in all styles. There's also a shop on Dongdaqiao Lu called Johnny and Jimmy. You'll spot it easily.

I'm visiting Beijing for a few days and am seeking local recommendations for purchasing good quality pearls, amber, coral and turquoise.

Most visitors go to Hongqiao Market (16 Hongqiao Lu, opposite the East Gate of the Temple of Heaven, Chongwen District), especially for pearls. There are a lot of vendors and some have a good reputation for both quality and price.

Do you know where I can get wool or cashmere to make long overcoats? I have looked in Muxiyuan but have not been able to find any decent wool fabric. Fabric at silk market and Yashow starts at 1,000 to 3,000 yuan.

Maybe you can try Gongzhufen on near the Gongzhufen subway station on Subway Line 1. It's one of the gems of the tailoring community here in Beijing. Get out of the subway and walk north, and the fabric market is right next to a KFC. Prepare to haggle aggressively, in Chinese, for the fabric, but you'll find the tailors are all generally nice.

My boy is two years old and he is really curious about stories. I'm looking for some good Chinese storybooks for him. Do you know where to get ones with nice pictures, simple Chinese characters and exciting plots?

We suggest e-books. One website to look at is bookbox.com, which provides plenty of animated e-books suitable for kids of all ages. Stories are written in 25 languages, including Mandarin.

(By Wei Ying)



Juan Ripolles at Tian'anmen Square

Dreamer's journey from poverty to Picasso

By Niu Chen

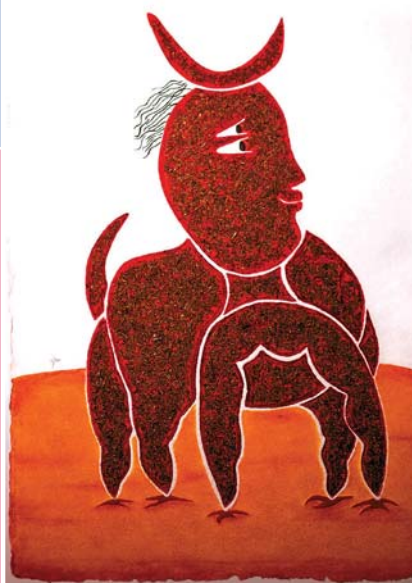
Juan Ripolles, a Spanish artist "the heir of Pablo Picasso and Matisse," is presenting his first exhibition in China at the Beijing World Art Museum.

His *Universe by Ripolles 2012*, July 15, includes 86 oil paintings, etchings and engravings that incorporate various materials.

Resine sculpture



Little Girl with Dots, engraving.



Tauromaquia, grabado materico



Sorprendida Azul, grabado materico,



The Thinker, fiber sculpture covered with Murano crystals



Bestia, grabado materico

Ripolles' collection use dramatic colors and special textures that are natural attention-grabbers. A video that plays in the exhibition hall shows Ripolles throwing powdered pigments at a canvas and creating the image using water. He also uses unconventional materials such as Murano crystal, fiberglass and resin.

His simple lines and contours create vivid images that are easy to grasp. In *PRIMAVERA* (Spring), a girl sits on a chair, holding a cat, wearing floral-print clothes while a butterfly flies in the blue background.

Although Ripolles' works may exude child-like innocence, in the context of his past they take on more complicated psychological factors.

Texture of life

Ripolles was born in September 1932, in Alcira, a town in the coastal province of Valencia, eastern Spain. His childhood was a time of constant poverty and war.

His mother died after labor and his father was too poor to support family. Ripolles was soon given away for adoption, though his adoptive family was also poverty-stricken. From a young age he learned to share in the housework and find side jobs.

When he was 12, Ripolles found his first adult job as an apprentice at an industrial painting workshop. The work put him in contact with many students of painting, and he began to study art on his own.

Ripolles devoted almost all of his spare time to studying and training, and all his holidays and days off were spent sketching from nature in the countryside in the company of his painter friends.

His diligence paid off, and Ripolles became the owner of the workshop with its 21 employees at the age of 22. To pursue his dreams, he sold the workshop and left for Paris with only a few clothes, some small change and a piece of bread.

In Paris, Ripolles picked up his old trade working for a French employer. From 8 am to 7 pm he worked in whitewashing and painting. After work, he studied at an art academy.

His life in Paris was substantial or even rich in terms of art, but his material hardship continued.

He spent all his money on art training. When he visited his family in Spain in 1956, people were surprised that Ripolles did not come back as well-off as many of his compatriots who went abroad to work or to do business. Ripolles lived in Paris for 10 years

The 10 years were a life in terms of art, cultivating him toward success.

It was the recognition by a famous gallery, that an internationally known brought his painting to various 18 painters who decided to just put him started to leave.

Unexpectedly, he showed him to the check for 250,000 found his name dislike Clave, Grau Salas, Alvar, and his work France and abroad.

At the end of 196 back and settle in Spain not disrupt his connection and in the following years US and Holland to dis

China dream

"Ripolles wanted to But at that time, he did in China," said Lu Xijiang's World Art Museum mine who has lived in recommended him to me saw the pictures of his unique style."

On his visit, Ripolles Houhai and other sc He said he was most asm with which people met students and faculty Academy of Fine Arts

"They have a keen of the students, and wanted to communicate Ripolles said.

He said he hopes to some Chinese cultural into his next work, saying fusion is a natural part of cultural interaction and growth

His exhibition will the provinces of Shan Hubei, Jiangsu and Guangdong over the next year celebrate the 40th anniversary of Sino-Spanish diplomatic relations in 2013

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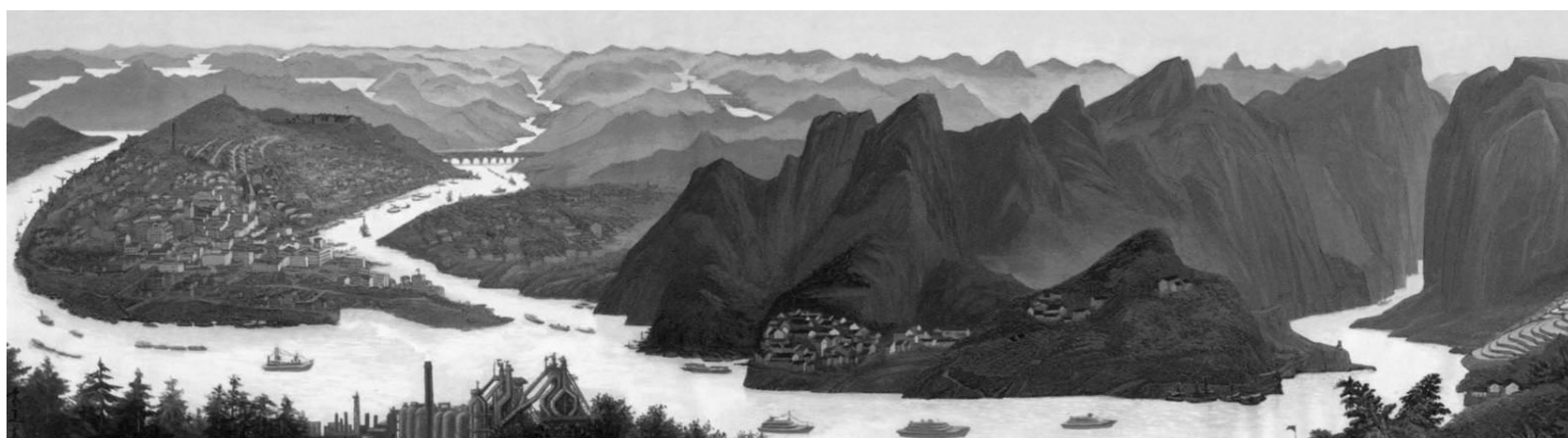
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In Love, Murano glass

Photo provided by Beijing World Art Museum

Fresco master donates work to Palace Museum



Part of The Yangtze River

Photos provided by Charles Zhu

By Charles Zhu

Leading contemporary painter Yuan Yunfu recently donated five of his paintings to the Palace Museum.

The acceptance of his work by China's highest public cultural and art institution is a significant recognition of his artistic achievement and a follow-up to Wu Guanzhong's 2006 donation of his 1974 painting, *The Yangtze River*.

Yuan, 79, a professor of art at Tsinghua University, said it has been a lifelong dream to have his work exhibited alongside the works of his artistic forefathers.

He credits his birthplace, Nantong, Jiangsu Province on the banks of the Yangtze

River, as one of his greatest influences.

Yuan began his artistic study by learning Western painting under the French-trained Lin Fengmian and Wu Dayu. He was profoundly influenced by their way of attaching Chinese spirit to Western materials.

He was particularly interested in the study of color, and idolized Van Gogh, Edouard Manet and Paul Gauguin. Their influence helped him use color to devise a new artistic experience that smacks of Chinese folk art, French impressionism and contemporary Western painting.

In Beijing, Yuan met a new group of teachers such as Zhang Guangyu and Zhang Ding, who

guided his attention to folk arts such as New Year paintings, which utilize heavy color and exaggerated expression.

As a master of traditional ink and brush, Yuan combines traditional strokes with modern means of artistic expression. He has creatively developed an original way to mix ink and color for a new artistic effect.

In his Chinese paintings, he draws inspiration from real life, enhances the expressiveness of colors in ink and brush paintings and incorporates innovative new materials and methods to serve modern artistic needs. He is particularly fond of lotus flowers, which symbolize "purity, beauty and cleanliness."

Critics hail Yuan as a pioneer of the modern Chinese mural. In 1972, he painted the gigantic fresco *The Yangtze River*, which shows a bird's-eye view of the world's third longest river as it zigzags through mountains, gorges and cliffs. It is one of Yuan's five works shown in the Palace Museum.

The Sichuan Mountains and Rivers, a fresco completed in 1979, is exhibited at Beijing Capital International Airport. His other frescos can be found in airports, subways, parks and halls throughout Beijing and the provinces of Jiangsu, Guangxi and Shaanxi. The materials he uses include acrylics, pottery, metal, colorful stones and fiber.

Yuan said he is immensely inspired by the Dunhuang grottoes, and since the 1960s he has been advising students to learn from its paintings. He said his art can be traced to free expression and the decorative and surrealist approaches of the Dunhuang art.

He draws inspiration from foreign art as well. He was one of the first artists to go to the US, in 1981. He held solo exhibitions there and spoke at universities about his work.

Yuan said he hopes that art will grow beyond an interest of the literati. He urged that art break down the artificial professional barriers to serve the growing needs of society.



Lu Xun Road in Shaoxing City



Blossoms and autumn



Mother and her daughter



News for kids, by kids.



No one knows better than Chinese parents how the future depends on children: most spare no effort to be “wolf dads” and “tiger moms” to send their children down the path to success. As part of its commitment to young readers, *Beijing Today*, together with *Middle School Times* and *Beijing Children's Weekly*, is beginning a weekly education report to share the views and events happening in the lives of Chinese youth.

What are they saying?



PPT guideline for university freshmen

As many as 10 million students who took the National College Entrance Exam may go on to further their education at a university. For those now bound for college, a new PowerPoint presentation about campus life is a must-see.

Its slides advise students to study for their own growth instead of to pass tests, and to read professional books related to their fields instead of limiting themselves to assigned reading.

They also warn against sleeping in class and spending

late nights on the Web.

Making it to Level 80 in a popular massively multi-player RPG takes 100 hours. That's enough time to travel between Beijing and Guangzhou three times by train, read all four of the Chinese classics once, sleep one extra hour every day of the semester or write 500 letters to your mother.

The presentation also lists useful skills learned on campus that can be useful after graduation.

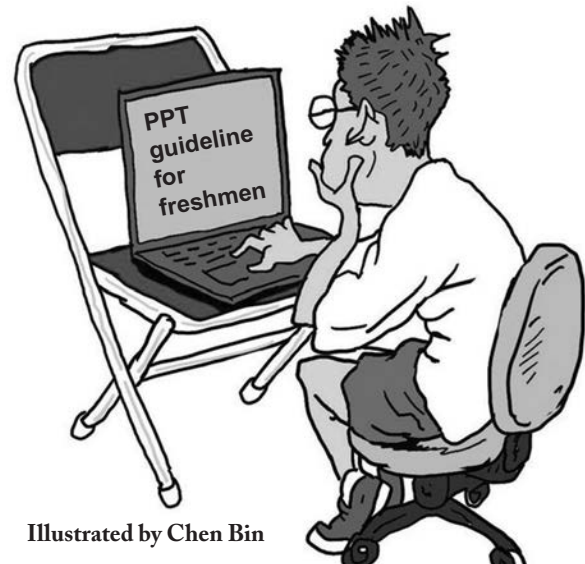
The slides employ sketches,

graphics and slogans designed to appeal to young people.

I can't help but applaud the creator of this presentation. It was a funny reminder of things teens need to remember if they want to stay on the right track and become successful.

Many of my relatives and friends told me that it is very important to learn as many useful things as possible on campus to be competitive after graduation.

— Zang Shu, reporter, Red Scarf News Agency



Illustrated by Chen Bin

What do they care about?



Move for honest business suspiciously opaque

Overcharging is common in China, particularly at tourist sites. A number of cases of it were reported this year in Sanya, Hainan Province.

Accordingly, the local government ordered all restaurants to purchase iPads and use them with standardized menu software to facilitate supervision of overcharging.

This means each restaurant and hotel will have to invest at least 6,000 yuan in software costs to comply with the new law.

Although the local government's logic may seem sound, I cannot agree with its decision. Are they really unable to find a more efficient and cost effective way to prevent immoral business practices?

Fair business happens when educated people exercise self-discipline. We should work on developing an environment that encourages fairness before cracking down on price gouging.

With the iPad approach, individual businesses will have to bear the burden of cost, which will in the end be passed back to consumers.

The government needs a more reasonable way to strengthen its supervision, such as empowering an office to investigate customer complaints and fine restaurants who engage in unethical practices.

Whatever approach the government takes, it should come from open votes after a debate. Such a unilateral decision by an official department is illegal.

I can't help wondering about hidden deals that might be behind the order.

— Li Zeyuan, student, Beijing No. 12 Middle School



Shoe polishing a volunteer service?

On May 25, 25 public servants in Shenzhen hit the streets to provide free shoe polishing and fulfill their annual volunteering quota.

The city government said the service was their most popular charitable activity in the year, and that it will continue to offer it in the coming year.

The public servants who came up with the idea were young employees who received the approval of their senior colleagues.

I can't say their heart wasn't in the right place, but isn't this a showy

way to go about meeting their yearly requirement?

Young government employees should have a better understanding of what it means to serve the people. They should be offering professional services to taxpayers rather than putting on such a show.

Shoe polishing is a service already covered by the market. These officials should move on and offer help in other areas. It's unsurprising their act drew jeers and mockery.

— Yu Hangjian, student, Beijing No. 12 Middle School

Why not focus on the domestic market?

Last month, the US Department of Commerce said it would impose a temporary anti-dumping tariff of between 31.1 percent and 250 percent on Chinese-made optical products.

This is yet another step the US has taken to smash the budding new energy industry in China.

In March, the department decided to levy special tariffs on all clean energy products coming out of China.

All countries are focusing on developing the new energy industry and optical products are essential for solar energy use.

China has plenty of opportunities to har-

vest solar energy on its own. In recent years, we have made great strides in this direction.

But strangely enough, 95 percent of the optical products we have developed were exported to the US. Why isn't anyone here using solar energy?

It's no surprise the US is imposing anti-dumping tariffs. Blocking exports will crush these developing industries.

We are in dire need of new energy to fuel our rapid economic growth. Yet we ignore our own solar technology and import 65 percent of our oil.

I believe the optics industry has huge domestic potential. Energy will only become increasingly scarce if we don't diversify our usage to include solar and wind power.

— Zhang Zongxuan, student, Beijing No. 12 Middle School

Clothes a designer would wear



Summer pants, 289 yuan



Uneven hem dress, 278 yuan

By Annie Wei

At every party and event, Zhang Min, a designer from Tianjin, always impresses others with her arty and edgy style, straight out of a 1930s black-and-white movie.

Her recent style pairs black dresses with heels, big pearl necklaces and hair accessories.

You can have that look as well.

Zhang customizes orders for her clients. "People who come to me are not looking for something average, or what they can buy from other boutique stores," Zhang said.

They come to Zhang to help them accomplish a certain look.

Zhang was initially more into art than fashion design. She majored in photography at the Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts. When she discovered that fashion was more inspiring, she began skipping photography classes to join fashion lectures.

Earlier this year, Zhang got the idea to produce ready-to-wear clothes and expand her customer pool.

"I don't have a theme this time," Zhang said. "I just want to make what I feel is cool and comfortable to wear on myself and share with people who might like it."

The clothes, mostly made of silk, are priced from 200 to 400 yuan.

We like her bold retro impact, such as vintage-style black high-waist shorts (178 yuan), paired with high heels.

If you want something for daily use, the black spotted gray silk pants (298 yuan) are comfortable and chic.

As yellow is popular this year, Zhang's vintage yellow dress (318 yuan) is good too: it's well made with a wrapped shoulder detail that's quite nice.

Although Zhang's first ready-to-wear line hasn't had much publicity, sales have been strong.

"Online shopping helps your design reach more people, including people who are far away," Zhang said. A customer from Yunnan Province found Zhang's design while looking around in Taobao. After chatting with Zhang online, she bought a piece and asked Zhang to customize more.

Website:
19780319.taobao.com



Zhang Min at her workshop



Loose pants, 278 yuan



Vintage pants, 268 yuan



Single-shoulder white jumpsuit, 320 yuan



Fish tail skirt, 239 yuan



High-waist slim-cut, 218 yuan

Photos provided by MIN.ZHANG

Easy and fun ways to cook at home

Quality meat for barbecues

Barbecuing is one of the most popular activities of summer. The key is to select quality meats, not the run-of-the-mill stuff that street vendors grill up.

Baode Food is an imported food and wine delivery company with clients that include five-star hotels. The company searches around the world for the best products, and brings them to China. It delivers to Beijing and Shanghai.

When a food is of high quality, it only requires minimal preparation.

The advantage of hosting a barbecue is it can accommodate lots of people with little prep work. For around 20 guests, it's easy to prepare about 10 dishes, from crab dip (178 yuan for 453 grams) to smoked Norwegian salmon (38 yuan for 140 grams), served with crackers.

Baode's crab comes from Hainan Province. Serve with a bit of mayonnaise and crackers, and you have the perfect combination.

The company provides different steaks, such as grain-fed ribeye (starting from 175 yuan for 800 grams) and premium ribeye (105 yuan or 280 grams). Both are tight, tender and juicy.

Grain-fed steak has more marbling, or fat, giving it a richer flavor. It is Baode's most popular item.

For people who want a healthier steak, they can order grass-fed because it has more natural flavors and less fat. Or try white fish, the Mahi Mahi (45 yuan for 226 grams), which is not oily. It's easy to grill with a little salt, pepper and lemon juice.

Corn on the cob is also great on the grill. Roast it directly. You can find fresh corn at local markets.

Website: baodefood.com



Double-boiled sea cucumber



Prawn cocktail

Photos provided by Ritz-Carlton Beijing Financial Street



Beef carpaccio

By Annie Wei

Cooking at home with friends is fun, but many people aren't sure they can make anything good.

Relax. *Beijing Today* has some tips for hosting amazing home-cooking parties.

Invite caterers

More and more people who attend culinary class are eager to show off their masterpieces back home, but for people who don't have time or energy (or ability) to cook regularly, why not hire a chef to do it?

Starting this week, the Ritz-Carlton Beijing Financial Street has begun hiring out its star chefs to offer cooking classes at customers' homes.

Categories include: British meals, authentic Italian recipes, traditional Chinese cuisine and desserts. Chefs will share their special tips at each class.

At the British class, chef Richard Hilton, the executive Sous chef, will teach classic dishes such as prawn cocktail and roast beef with Yorkshire pudding.

Omar Ugoletti, chef de Cuisine of Cepe, will teach

popular Italian dishes such as beef carpaccio with seasonal mixed greens, parmesan cheese and truffles, tagliatelle with Bolognese sauce and tiramisu.

Chinese chef Jimmy Wong will showcase the "healthy Chinese" experience, teaching dishes like double-boiled sea cucumber with sea whelk, cold mixed fungus with wasabi, pan-fried shredded beef and sweet almond tea.

For dessert, you can learn from Charles Zhao, the executive pastry chef and best-known dessert master in China. He will show you how to make almond soufflé with vanilla ice cream and mango

passion jelly, coconut docquoise with saunted Sichuan pepper pineapple and mango mousse and mango ravioli, as well as a creamy truffle chocolate tart.

The prices are not cheap, starting from 10,000 yuan for four to six people, including ingredients and transportation. But you can be assured of a professional experience: before the class, hotel staff will come over to inspect your kitchen to make sure you have everything you need. If not, they'll bring their own cooking materials.

For more information, contact 6601 666.



Photo by Lu Di

Hotel

Marriott International launches Weibo presence

Top hotel employer Marriot International announced on June 27 it would start a new contest on the Sina Weibo network to attract new employees.

Our Hotel Rocks, the contest, invites users to create and submit one-minute videos about why Marriott is a great place to work. Thirty-seven videos were submitted by hotels in Shanghai, Sanya, Guangzhou, Beijing, Huizhou and Shenzhen. Weibo users voted for their favorites among the Top 8 between June 25 and July 1.

Jim Pilarski, Marriott International's chief HR officer for Asia-Pacific, Middle East and Africa, said the contest was an amazing employee engagement initiative that highlights the creativity and passion of everyone working at Marriott.

Pilarski also said Weibo could help Marriott to directly connect with talented individuals who are interested in working for the company.

Marriott will more than double its number of hotels in China by the end of 2014 to more than 100, requiring some 30,000 new employees.



Singaporean officials choose Grand Millennium

Singapore's Minister of Defense Ng Eng Hen (center) visited Beijing on June 18 and stayed at the Grand Millennium Beijing. Gino Tan (left), general manager of the hotel, and Singapore's Ambassador to China H.E. Stanley Loh were present to welcome him. Ng will meet with Chinese government officials during his stay in the capital.

"Martell Artists of the Year"

Martell Artists of the Year 2012 recognized extraordinary talents on June 26 at Today Art Museum. This year's winners – Liu Wei, Xiang Jing, Ye Yongqing and Philip-Lorca diCorcia – were selected to reflect the development and changes happening in contemporary art.

Today's fine art is no longer judged by the style, technique or materials used. The concept and ideas behind each piece are becoming more important, said Zhang Zikang, director of Today Art Museum. Martell chooses

artists who display extraordinary creativity.

Liu, for example, has been using a variety of media to reflect and question established rules and restrictions. His speculation on the outside world is expressed through artistic means, symbols and practice.

Xiang's sculptures show many levels of refinement and a deep compassion for human nature. Her work has strong classical traits and shows complicated emotions. Ye uses Western artistic language to shape

Eastern scenes in humorous and casual way.

Philip-Lorca diCorcia uses ingenious lighting to redefine the instant beauty of photography, giving seemingly everyday scenes an individualized sense of alienation while shedding new light on them.

Martell and Today Art Museum launched the Focus on Talents project in 2010 to explore and promote Chinese contemporary art. This year's project celebrates the centenary of Martel Cordon Bleu cognac.



IdeaS designs effective pricing strategy

To fight increasing competition in the Chinese hotel industry, IdeaS has developed a new and effective pricing strategy.

Before finalizing its recommended pricing strategy, IdeaS works with its clients to consider both historical revenue and occupancy as well as projected revenue. Comparing occupancy and average daily rates (ADRs) can offer deep insight into pricing and revenue management opportunities.

It also helps hoteliers identify their true competitors, even those in other countries or attached to a family member's house – key competitors that are often overlooked. IdeaS advises hoteliers to research their competition and compare their own hotels to nearby hotels on price and perceived values. They should also account for seasonal changes, including weekday versus weekend patterns and peak seasons.

After the former preparations, IdeaS helps hoteliers figure out their value and to increase their competitive advantage.

IdeaS is an SAS company that offers industry-leading pricing and revenue management software, services and consulting to hospitality and travel industries.

Refreshing French cuisine for summer at S.T.A.Y restaurant

Satisfy your craving for gourmet French cuisine with the new summer menu at the Shangri-La Hotel's S.T.A.Y. Restaurant.

One of the highlight of the menu is romaine hearts with crispy vegetables. Fresh seasonal vegetables bring out the tender flavor of king crab meat. The mixture of olive oil and mint leaves enhances the refreshing taste of the dish. It is the perfect fresh appetizer for summer.

The cool fennel soup, a French classic, is also recommended. Unlike tra-

ditional Chinese soups, it has a rich taste created from select fennel powder. Fresh sea bream and tiger crab meat add to the soup, making it sweet and silky with a cool taste.

Braised blue lobster is the top delicacy of the season. The classic dish retains the juiciness of the blue lobster while balancing it with a tangy sauce.

Snacks by the Pastry Library invite guests to embrace the sweetness of summer. The newly launched Dame Blanche is not only cool and refreshing, but also

demonstrates a wonderful combination of fresh vanilla and rich milky flavor. The thick chocolate sauce adds an extra dose of euphoria.

The raspberry lemon soufflé meringue is also worth tasting. The crunchy pastry encases a soft and fluffy filling. The fresh raspberries offer a fruity flavor that combines with a sweet and sour taste.

Where: Unit 2633, China World Tower 1, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6841 2211 ext. 6727
(By Bao Chengrong)



Dining



Fri, Jul. 6

Drama Lifetime achievement award

This drama is about an old woman with dementia. Playwright Chen Xiaoling is a professor at the Central Academy of Drama, and director Mao Ernan is a graduate from there.

Where: Penghao Theater, 35 Dong Mianhua Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: Every day until July 8,
7:30-11:30 pm
Admission: 80 yuan (40 for students)

Tel: 6400 6472

Art Festival Beijing Creativity and Culture Youth Festival

Participating artists include Someone, Unionbunny, Life Test, Return the Truth, Zhao Zhao, Bai Wanlong, Wang Yawei and Du Meng.

Where: China Central Academy of

Fine Arts, 8 Huajiadi Nan Jie, Chaoyang District

When: Every day Friday and Saturday until August 5, 1-9 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 15210822058



Sat, Jul. 7

Movie

Le Roi de l'évasion

This French adventure comedy, written and directed by Alain Guiraudie, premiered in 2009.

Where: UCCA, 798 Art District, Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7-9:30 pm

Admission: 15 yuan

Tel: 5780 0200

Concert

BBC Wales Symphony Orchestra China Tour 2012

Chief conductor Thierry Fischer, deputy guest conductor Francois-Xavier Roth and conductor Laureate Tadaaki Otaka of the BBC Wales Symphony lead this tour, which presents new and old songs.

Where: National Grand Theater, 2 Xi Changanjie, Xicheng District

When: Every day until July 8,
7:30-9:30 pm

Admission: 180-800 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000



Sun, Jul. 8

Nightlife IZ band's live

Musician Ma

Muer and his band IZ from Xinjiang will provide a special play in Yugongyishan. Although they rarely perform domestically, they have many followers and are often invited to music festivals abroad.

They will attend the "Riddu Riddu" music festival in Norway.

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30-11:30 pm

Admission: 100 yuan (80 for booking)

Tel: 6404 2711

Mon, Jul. 9

Nightlife

Indian sitar performance

The guitarist of the band Rudra's Sage bought a sitar in India and studied Indian music from 1999 to 2000. His first album, *Eight Petals of Eternal Dawn*, was

released in 2009.

Where: Lujiu Café, 109 Nanluogu Xiang, Dongcheng District

When: Every Monday until

August 6, 9-11 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 13439580218



Wed, Jul. 11

Exhibition

Indian Highway

This exhibition will present works from more than 30 artists, comprising different themes through various media. They explore society, modern India, environmental protection, religion, sexuality and class.

Where: UCCA, 798 Art District, Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Everyday until August 26, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: 15 yuan

Tel: 5780 0200



Tue, Jul. 10

Drama

Night, Mother

Written by Marsha Norman, the novel won the Pulitzer Prize in 1983. The story centers around a girl who decides, one Saturday evening, to end her life. The director of this stage adaptation is Liu Libin.

Where: Penghao Theater, 35 Dong Mianhua Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: Every day until July 12, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80 yuan (40 for students)

Tel: 6400 6472

Movie

Piano, Solo

This movie depicts the life and death of a musician. The director and playwright is Riccardo Milani. The movie was nominated for the Silver Ribbon and David di

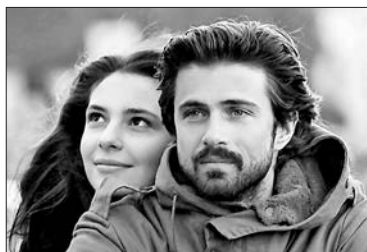
Donatello Awards in 2008.

Where: Theater of IIC Beijing, 2 Sanlitun Dong Er Jie, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30-9:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6532 2187



Thu, Jul. 12

Exhibition

Florence and the Renaissance

This exhibition is presented by China and Italy. More than 67 works are on display from more than 20 Italian museums and art galleries, including oil paintings, drawings, sculpture and furniture accessories from the 15th and 16th centuries.

Where: National Museum of China, 16 Dong Changanjie, Dongcheng District

When: Every day until October 1, 9 am – 5 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6512 8321

(By Liu Xiaochen)

Wuyuan, a secluded summer haven in the mountains

By Charles Zhu

With summer approaching, people are beginning to draw up plans to tide over the summer heat in cool places.

Beijing Today recommends Wuyuan, Jiangxi Province, a sub-tropical monsoon region with an annual average temperature of 16 C.

Wuyuan was on the border of the kingdoms of Wu and Chu during ancient times and sits at the crossroads to Jiangxi, Anhui and Zhejiang provinces. Huangshan lies 176 kilometers to its northeast.

It has always been known for its green hills, rivers, mountain streams and waterfalls amid bamboo groves. It is dubbed by photographers, Chinese and foreign, as "one of the most beautiful villages in China."

It was part of Huizhou, southern Anhui, during the Tang Dynasty, and the local culture still retains its influences in dialect and opera.

Ziyang, where the county government resides, is a sight to behold. The town is hemmed in on three sides by a river, and its ancient city walls give visitors a magnificent view over the water.

There are well-preserved Ming- and Qing-style residential homes featuring whitewashed walls and black-tiled roofs in ancient villages such as Qinghua, Xiaoqi, Likeng, Yancun and Sikou.

There's a covered rainbow bridge in Qinghua, riverside homes in Likeng and rare and unique carved bricks and wood houses in Yancun. These are all living fossils used in the study of ancient Chinese architecture.

It's impossible to see everything in a single day, so tourists are encouraged to split their itinerary: either take the northern line from Yancun, Sixi and Qinghua, to Likeng, or the eastern line from Likeng and Wangkou to Xiaoqi. Tour guides encourage visitors to stay at a village they like – they are surely to find one.

With a particularly rich cultural heritage, Wuyuan has always been home to ancient books – 172 of them written by local authors were selected for the *Si Ku Quan Shu*, a collection of books compiled during the Qing Dynasty.

As clearly documented in its archives, Wuyuan has sent 2,665 people to serve at feudal courts. Locals especially pride himself over the work of Zhu Xi, the most eminent philosopher during the Ming Dynasty, and Zhan Tianyou, among the first Chinese students to study in the US and inventor of a flexible joint that connects train carriages. Both men are from Wuyuan.

The most prominent handicraft is lanterns. They come in many shapes, including the horse, lion, plum, flower, flower boat and lotus.

Wuyuan also offers the chance to see Nuo dance, meant to scare away evil spirit, recorded in Confucius' *Analects* and *History of the Late Han Dynasty*.

Its local opera, Huidiao, was introduced to Beijing during the reign of the Qianlong emperor. It eventually evolved into present-day Peking Opera.

And as one of China's major tea producers, Wuyuan offers a special tea-drinking ritual that embodies the local philosophy of "respect, harmony, diligence and quiet."

There's something for gourmets, too: the local offering of steamed soft-shelled turtles, which are caught from mountain rivers or ponds that are absolutely unpolluted. Locals eat this delicacy with salt and two pieces of ginger.

Traditional Chinese medicine practitioners believe that soft-shelled turtle helps strengthen *qi*.

Also, fresh carp is readily available, and stewed to produce a special flavor.

Don't miss the *chukka*, "stone chicken" that's only slightly bigger than a frog, and *fenzhengrou*, steamed pork in rice flour.

How to get there: Take a train to Jingdezhen or Jiujiang in Jiangxi Province (10 to 12 hours from Beijing), then take a long-distance bus (2 to 3 hours) to Wuyuan. Or drive along the Beijing-Shanghai Highway to Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province, turn toward Hefei, capital of Anhui Province, and continue south to Wuyuan.



Local tour guide



Winter morning in Wuyuan



Wuyuan houses.



Tea leaf pickers in traditional clothes



Native wines made of berries, rice and kiwis.

CFP Photos